

the battalion, task force, and separate company levels, and the unit receives its last strategic update before deployment. On D-1, a brigade-level RSOI AAR is conducted by the operations group commander. Attendees include the brigade commander, executive officer, S-1, S-3, S-4, task force and battalion commanders, and separate company commanders.

Observer controllers assigned to NTC observe the unit during RSOI and provide feedback to unit leaders through the AAR process. To gain a comprehensive view of unit activities during RSOI, the OCs use the following frame of reference:

**Intelligence.** Strategic and tactical information processing.

**Building Logistics Power.** Large-unit supply actions, such as breaking down and issuing supply commodity items; theater logistics base interface, including the opening of theater accounts.

**Training.** ROEs, safety, environment, and other critical subjects.

**Building Combat Power.** Marshalling activities, equipment-personnel integration, staging area operations.

**Force Protection.** OPSEC, sensitive item and ammunition security, and movement control in staging area.

**Battle Command.** "See Yourself" issues (nature, condition, status).

Keys to success during RSOI include developing and implementing a plan for building combat power and a system for tracking such an effort. Intermediate goals, established by the chain of command, help measure progress and facilitate the adjustment of priorities during RSOI. Additionally, it is important to brief soldiers on the in-country political and tactical situations so they know the larger themes that drive the scenario; that is, the reason for deployment and the names of the countries involved, as well as friendly and potential enemy forces. The degree to which the

unit has been briefed becomes apparent when news media representatives from the fictitious network interview soldiers and their leaders at all levels and ask questions pertaining to these very issues.

RSOI is the primary vehicle through which force projection doctrine is trained at the NTC. In time, it will have a decisive effect on the Army's ability to conduct unopposed theater entry operations around the world. As more units experience RSOI as a standard feature of NTC rotations, it will also become an integral part of their home-station training. Along with other adjustments made to address a changing world situation, RSOI training at the NTC is a stepping stone to a new era in the combat readiness of the force.

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# OPFOR Tactical Reconnaissance

**SPECIALIST MATTHEW R. CRUMPTON**

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the threat once posed by those entities no longer exists in the form we can recall from a decade ago. Many vestiges of both systems remain, however, in the doctrine and equipment of today's potential threats to world stability. For that reason, the National Training Center (NTC) is patterning its opposing force (OPFOR) on the doctrine and organizations of foreign armies and not just one particular nation, to prepare units undergoing training at the NTC to deal with future adversaries.

Units conducting operations at the NTC soon learn that advancing without

the intelligence provided by reconnaissance means taking unnecessary chances—often with catastrophic results. They also learn that the OPFOR itself places extensive emphasis on reconnaissance. This article will briefly discuss one divisional reconnaissance variant, although OPFOR deployed assets may vary based upon the tactical situation.

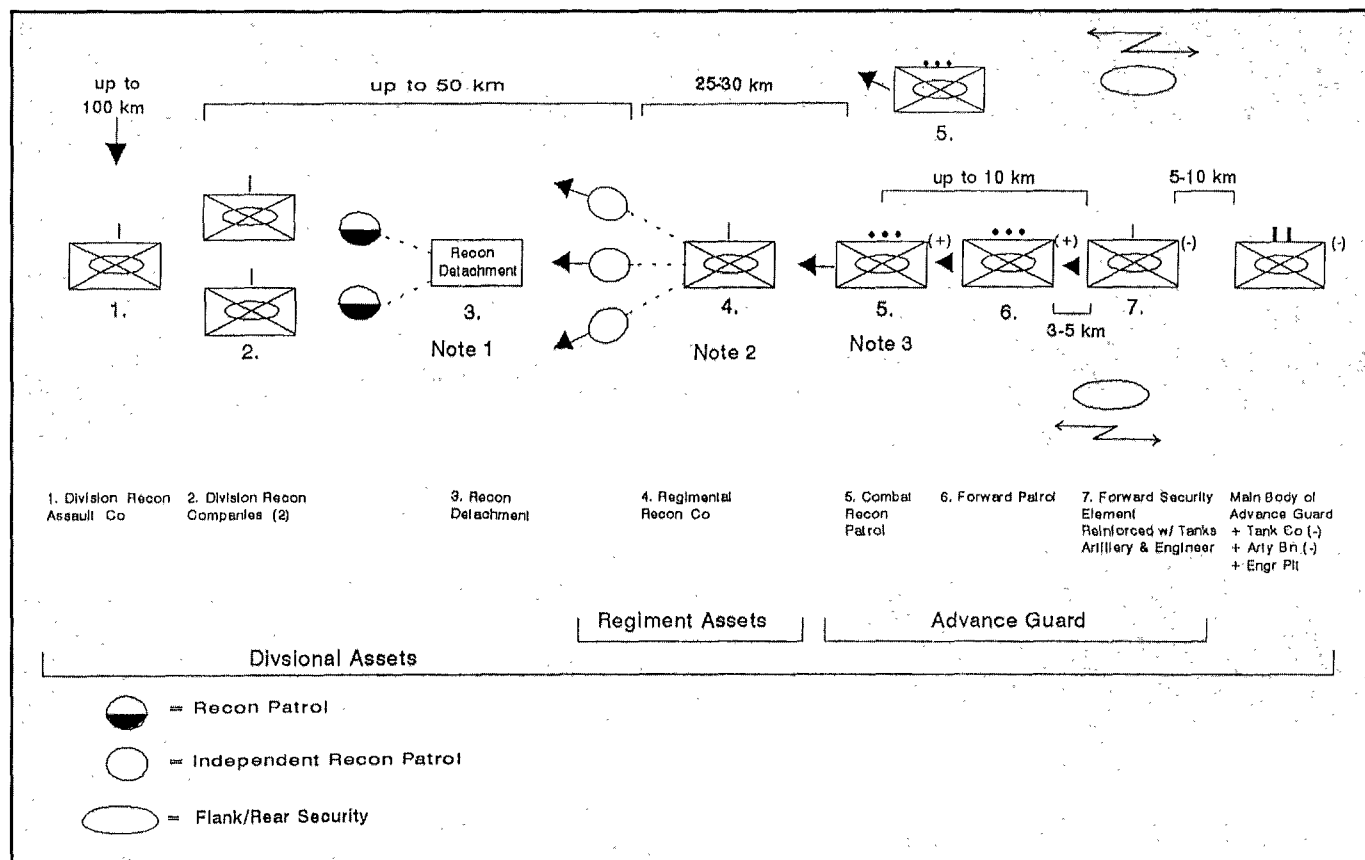
## **Tactical Reconnaissance**

The purpose of tactical reconnaissance is to support the operations of units at division level and below. These operations are limited to the tactical depth of the battlefield (50-100

kilometers). At the tactical level, OPFOR ground forces employ a variety of small reconnaissance and security groupings that are tasked and tailored to meet the specific needs of the tactical commander.

The OPFOR uses the principles of *focus, continuity, aggressiveness, reliability, accuracy, timeliness, secrecy, and reserves* to guide its reconnaissance activities. It strives to achieve these both simultaneously and continuously on the NTC battlefield.

The NTC OPFOR doctrinally employs four methods of reconnaissance: *observation, raids, ambush, and reconnaissance by combat*. In the



**Figure 1. Employment of Tactical Reconnaissance**

execution of their mission to acquire information about its opponent and the area of operations, reconnaissance elements will attempt to uncover intelligence on the order of battle, the fire plan, indicators of when the enemy will employ precision weapons, and the locations of control points, antitank weapons, and reserves. The OPFOR will also attempt to locate, identify, and report the capability of the weapon systems to deliver nuclear fires when employed.

The OPFOR commander concerns himself with the enemy and terrain directly opposite him, out to a depth of 100-150 kilometers, and his tactical

reconnaissance priorities include the following:

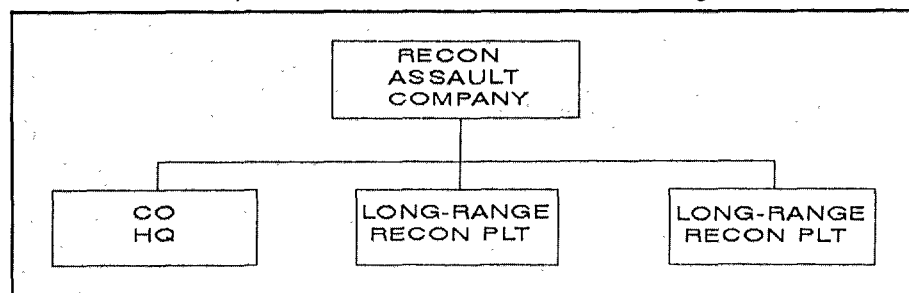
- Direct support artillery and its associated radar locations.
- The disposition of tanks and infantry antitank systems.
- Command, control, and logistical facilities.
- The nature and extent of obstacles.
- The locations of defensive positions.

## Divisional Assets

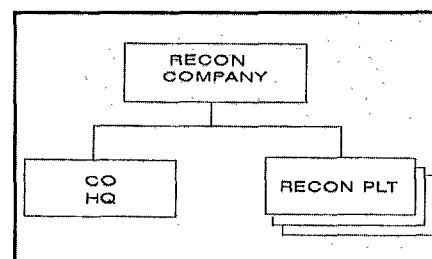
Figure 1 represents a typical OPFOR divisional security grouping during an offensive march operation. Although the distance and organizational struc-

ture may well vary according to conditions of mission, enemy, terrain, troops, and time (METTT), this figure provides a good schematic of the density and spatial relationship of the OPFOR's reconnaissance effort that maneuver units must counter.

The reconnaissance assault company—also known as a long-range reconnaissance company—may be inserted by parachute, helicopter, vehicle, or on foot up to 100 kilometers forward of the division's main body. The company (Figure 2) is broken down into teams of five or six men with the mission of locating high precision weapons, command and control posts,



**Figure 2. Typical Reconnaissance Assault Company**



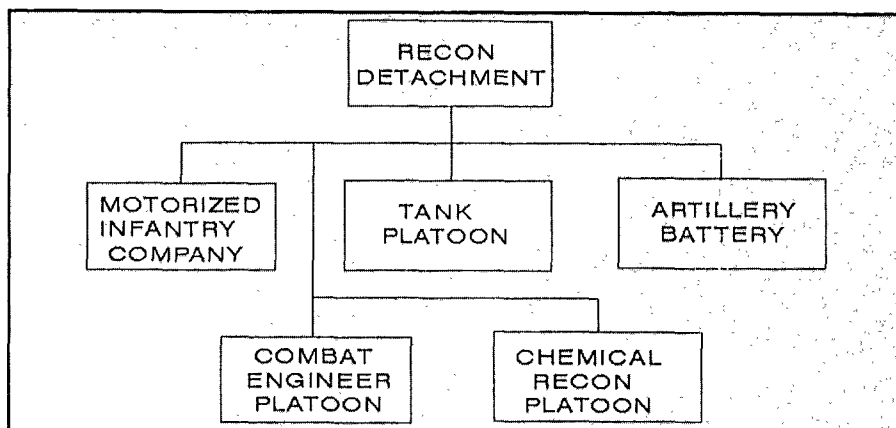
**Figure 3. Typical Reconnaissance company**

headquarters, and an opponent's reserves. These teams can be equipped with antitank grenade launchers (ATGLs), small arms, and possibly armored scout vehicles that can be carried by transport helicopters.

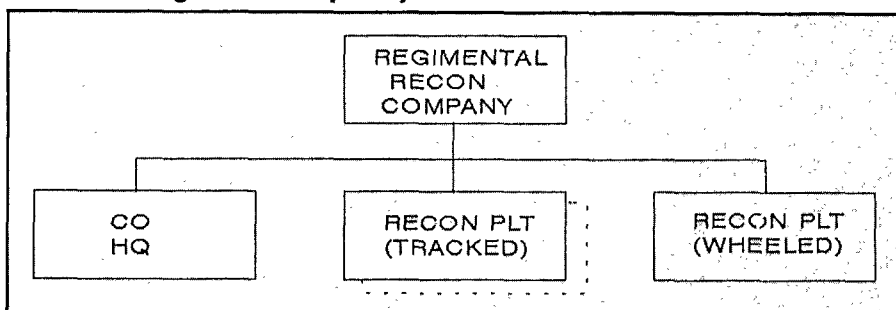
The division's two reconnaissance companies will operate across the division's front, and to a depth of up to 50 kilometers. The typical reconnaissance company consists of a headquarters and three reconnaissance platoons (Figure 3). Each company may be part of a reconnaissance detachment or may form independent patrols. These patrols receive their own reconnaissance objectives and can be expected to avoid contact in order to achieve them. Each patrol consists of two or three vehicles and operates on multiple axes in the area between the reconnaissance assault company and the regimental reconnaissance company. The size and vehicle mix of each patrol will depend on the terrain, enemy strength, and the relative importance of its axis within the division's main axis. These patrols may also be equipped with ATGLs, small arms, and armored scout vehicles.

A reconnaissance detachment, the largest tactical reconnaissance grouping, may be deployed by a division or sometimes by a regiment. The detachment is generally deployed along an axis, or in a given zone along the most important direction of attack, with the mission of gathering information about the enemy or terrain. Although normally employed in the attack, it may also be used during the march and forward of the security zone in the defense.

The reconnaissance detachment normally consists of a motorized rifle, tank, reconnaissance, or parachute assault company or battalion, reinforced with armor, air defense, antitank, engineer, artillery, chemical, and helicopter support. The detachment operates by deploying platoon-sized reconnaissance patrols that will avoid contact at all costs, conducting reconnaissance by battle only if specifically ordered to do so. Once in contact with the enemy forces, the reconnaissance patrols assume observation missions. Units of maneuver forces may be used for recon-



**Figure 4. Temporary Reconnaissance Detachment**



**Figure 5. Typical Regimental Reconnaissance Company**

naissance because of the lack of standard reconnaissance assets at a given echelon, or because the commander wants to retain his trained reconnaissance forces in reserve and use regular infantry for the initial reconnaissance effort. The temporary reconnaissance detachment shown in Figure 4 is only one example of a force that has been task organized in response to conditions imposed by METT.

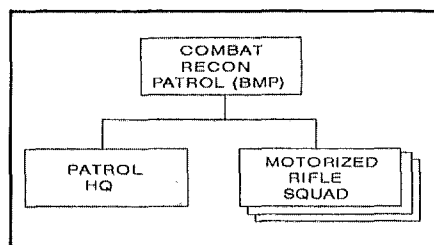
#### **Regimental Assets**

The typical regimental reconnaissance company (Figure 5) normally operates 25-30 kilometers in advance of the regiment's lead march elements, but it can range up to 50 kilometers. This distance corresponds to the depth of the enemy's second echelon or reserve, which will be a subsequent objective of the regiment. The company will operate either intact, as part of a reconnaissance detachment, or decentralized, in the form of independent reconnaissance patrols.

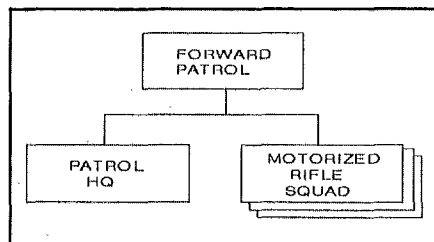
The regimental reconnaissance company may deploy platoon-sized patrols, each consisting of up to three vehicles and as few as 18 soldiers, that will usual-

ly operate 10-15 kilometers from the company itself. As in the case of the reconnaissance detachment described earlier, these patrols will conduct reconnaissance by observation, avoiding detection and engagement by the enemy, but may conduct reconnaissance by combat if required.

The combat reconnaissance patrols (CRP) of the advance guard doctrinally move approximately five kilometers to the front or flanks of the advance company, and up to 10 kilometers ahead of the parent battalion to reconnoiter and provide security. The parent company or battalion also maintains contact with and observation of the CRP to provide fire support. Normally a platoon-sized formation, the CRP may also be augmented with chemical and engineer reconnaissance assets. If the situation requires, more than one patrol can be dispatched. Since its mission is heavily weighted on route security, the patrol is more limited in the depth of its actions than other reconnaissance patrols. It may engage a weaker force by ambush, but observation is the preferred method of reconnaissance. Figure 6 represents a typical combat recon-



**Figure 6. Typical Combat Reconnaissance Patrol**



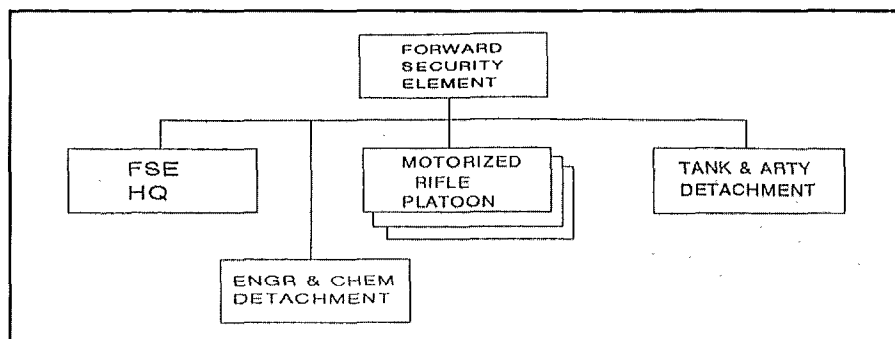
**Figure 7. Typical Forward Patrol**

naissance patrol.

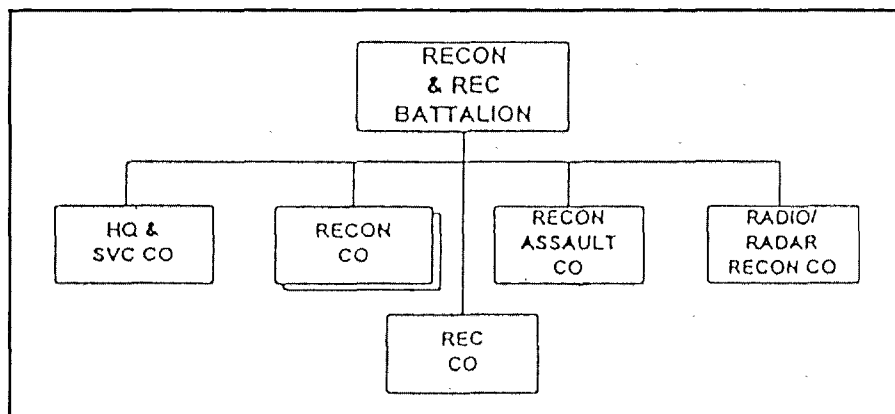
The forward patrol (Figure 7), usually a squad or platoon-sized unit, follows the combat reconnaissance patrol in the march order, and travels three to five kilometers ahead of the forward security element. The patrol, which is sent out from the advance guard battalion, may be augmented by engineer and chemical reconnaissance assets.

The purpose of the patrol is to ensure security and protection against a surprise attack, but a patrol may also attack from the march to destroy weak enemy forces or seize higher ground. The forward patrol organization may be mistaken for a combat reconnaissance patrol, since both are likely to be platoon-sized and moving only a few kilometers ahead of the forward security element. The main difference, however, is that the forward patrol is not always employed, and when it is it will remain on the same route of march as the forward security element.

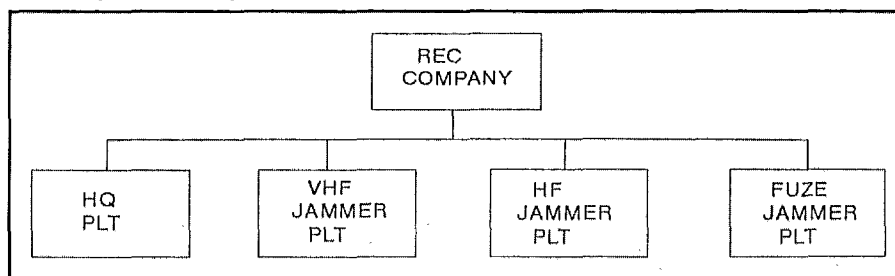
The next element in the order of march of the advance guard battalion is the forward security element (Figure 8). This element is normally one of the battalion's three infantry companies designated to travel up to 10 kilometers ahead of—and provide security for—the main body of the advance guard. The forward security element can be reinforced with armor, artillery, engineer, and antitank assets.



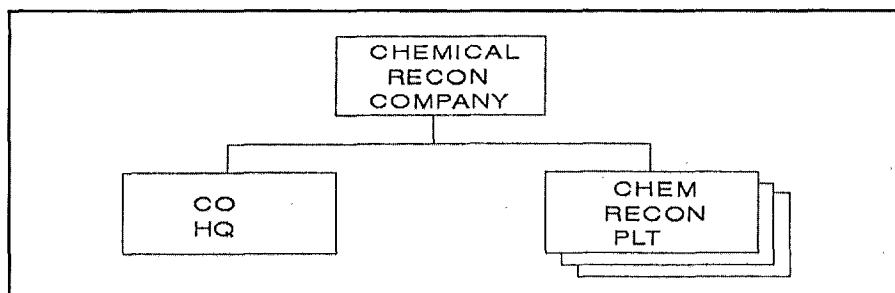
**Figure 8. Typical Forward Security Element**



**Figure 9. Typical Reconnaissance and Radioelectronic Battalion**



**Figure 10. Radioelectronic Combat Company**



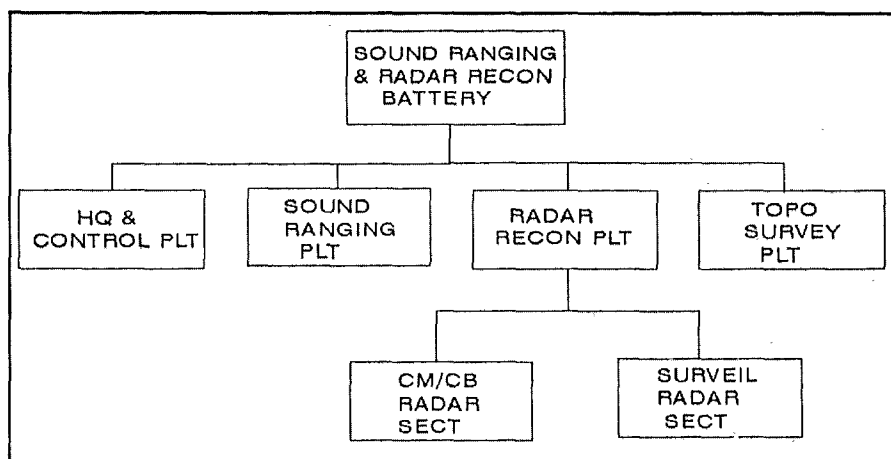
**Figure 11. Typical Chemical Reconnaissance Company**

## Other Reconnaissance Assets

Several other assets that are not reflected in Figure 1 can significantly affect the outcome of an engagement:

The reconnaissance and radioelectronic combat (REC) battalion (Figure 9) consists of two reconnaissance com-

panies, a reconnaissance assault company—also known as a long-range (or airborne) reconnaissance company—a radio and radar reconnaissance company, and a REC company. During offensive operations, the battalion's ground reconnaissance



**Figure 12. Typical Sound Ranging and Radar Reconnaissance Battery**

assets can operate to a depth of 100 kilometers, as discussed earlier.

The priorities of the radio and radar reconnaissance companies include command and control nets in general, tank communications, and radio intercept of maneuver force command and control nets. The priorities for radar intercept focus on surveillance, countermortar, counterbattery, and air defense radars in both the covering force and the main defensive areas. The REC company (Figure 10) is an integral element of OPFOR doctrine. It relies upon the manipulation of electromagnetic emissions across the entire spectrum to accomplish its mission of jamming message and data traffic and the fuzes of munitions.

The engineer reconnaissance platoon is subordinate to the divisional engineer battalion and has the mission of collecting information on the enemy's engineer capabilities and the condition of terrain in the area of interest. The platoon can also operate as an engineer reconnaissance patrol, consisting of a squad or platoon of engineer specialists sent out to obtain engineer intelligence on the enemy and terrain. This patrol may operate either independently or with other maneuver and reconnaissance elements in enemy territory.

The chemical reconnaissance company (Figure 11), a unit of the divisional chemical protection battalion, has the dual mission of collecting information on an opponent's nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) capabilities, and

warning of the potential or actual use of agents. The company can deploy patrols to detect the extent and nature of any NBC contamination. A normal chemical reconnaissance patrol consists of a chemical reconnaissance squad and



one special chemical reconnaissance vehicle. Such patrols may also be formed from elements of the regimental chemical protection platoons, and may operate independently or as part of other maneuver and reconnaissance elements.

The last reconnaissance asset to be found in the division's structure is the sound ranging and radar reconnaissance battery (Figure 12), a unit that can prove invaluable in the desert, where sound can carry for great distances and seem to come from many directions. Subordinate to the divi-

sional artillery regiment, the battery is equipped with several battlefield surveillance radars and a countermortar and counterbattery radar. These items of equipment may be operated either independently or as part of other maneuver and reconnaissance elements. (On request, INFANTRY will send a complete set of OPFOR organizational diagrams that also includes unit equipment. The address is P.O. Box 52005, Fort Benning, GA 31995-2005.)

The above represents only one divisional reconnaissance variant that units may encounter at the National training Center. The primary objective of the new OPFOR concept is to overcome the perceived doctrinal rigidity of the Soviet-based OPFOR. This concept will provide a more flexible doctrine that will provide OPFOR commanders a wider range of tactical options. This capabilities-based threat—grounded in a consistent body of documented threat doctrine—will pit our leaders against the OPFOR in a variety of imaginative, realistic scenarios that will develop intuitive, agile, and versatile battle commanders who can read the enemy on tomorrow's battlefields.

The baseline documents for this article are the Heavy OPFOR Organization Guide, TRADOC Pamphlet 350-1; Heavy OPFOR Operational Art Handbook, TRADOC Pamphlet 350-14; and Heavy OPFOR Tactics Handbook, TRADOC Pamphlet 350-16, which documents the capabilities-based OPFOR model. The model was developed to provide a flexible training threat that can be tailored to represent a wide range of potential threat capabilities and organizations. Once units training at the NTC have operated against this OPFOR model, they will be better prepared to deal with the threat that deploying U.S. forces will likely face as we enter the next century.

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